

# Audacity QuickStart Guide

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**WHAT IS IT?** Audacity is free, cross-platform, open source audio editing software ideally suited for oral history and digital storytelling projects. For COV projects, we use Audacity to record narrated audio and edit audio files from recorded interviews. Download Audacity from <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>.

**BASICS:** These are the basic elements of audacity audio tracks:

Each audio clip is recorded or inserted on a new row.



This is the current location of the playhead.

These are waveforms.

## PLAYBACK CONTROLS:

Go to the beginning of the file

Begin recording new audio from the playhead

Stop playback



Play from the location of the playhead

Pause playback



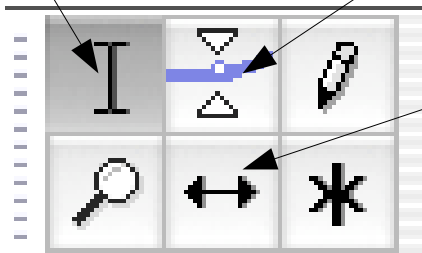
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**BASIC EDITING TOOLS:** Three basic tools are used for editing audio files in Audacity. Select the tool you want from the menu in the upper left corner.

The **insertion bar** (I-bar) allows selection of part of audio files, and moving the playhead to a new location.



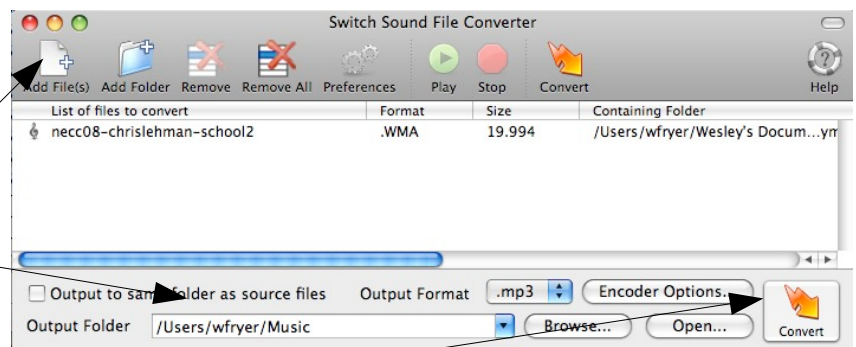
The **envelope tool** creates editing points so audio can fade in or out

The **move tool** is used to change the relative position of audio clips on the timeline.

**PREPARE AUDIO CLIPS:** To import an audio clip from your digital audio recorder or another source (like a website) make sure the file is in WAV or MP3 format. Use free Switch software ([www.nch.com.au/switch](http://www.nch.com.au/switch)) to convert WMA files (Windows Media Audio) into MP3 before importing to Audacity.

## CONVERTING A WMA FILE INTO MP3 :

- Open the Switch application on your computer.
- Click ADD FILE(+) and navigate to the location where you saved your audio recording.
- Change the Output Folder to the desired location (i.e. the desktop)
- Click CONVERT in the lower right corner.



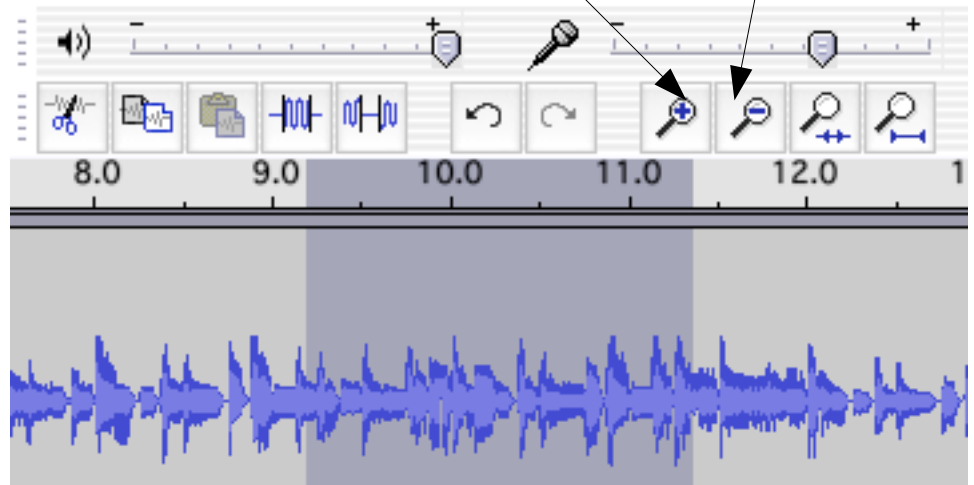
**TIP:** If the OUTPUT FORMAT is not set to MP3, change it to MP3. This will create a smaller file than WAV format because it is compressed. Since the recording just includes spoken words and not music, you can further reduce the filesize by clicking ENCODER OPTIONS and setting the bitrate to 32 kbps.



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**MAGNIFIER:** Use the magnifier to zoom in (+) and zoom out (-) to make more precise selections with the I-Bar:



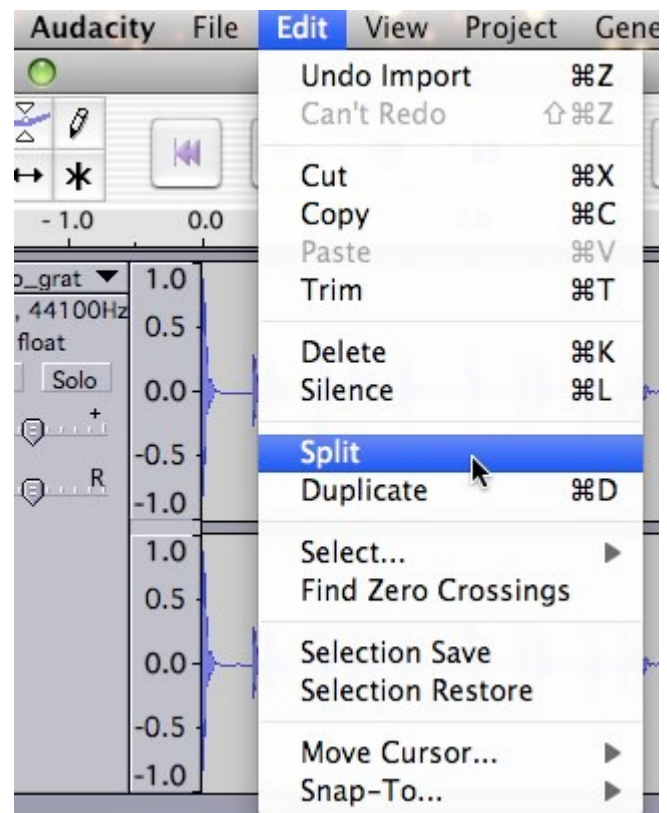
**DELETE:** After using the I-Bar to make a selection, press the delete key to remove selected audio.

**SPLIT A CLIP:** To split or separate an audio clip into two pieces:

Use the I-Bar and click inside the audio clip's waveform where you want the clip split.

From the EDIT menu choose SPLIT.

A new audio track will be created with the "split" audio included, which can be edited as desired.



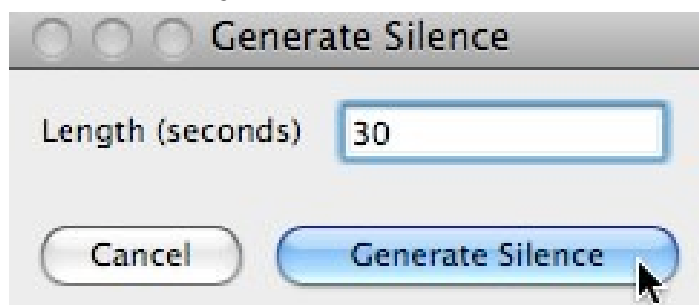
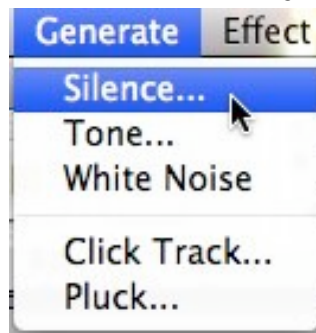
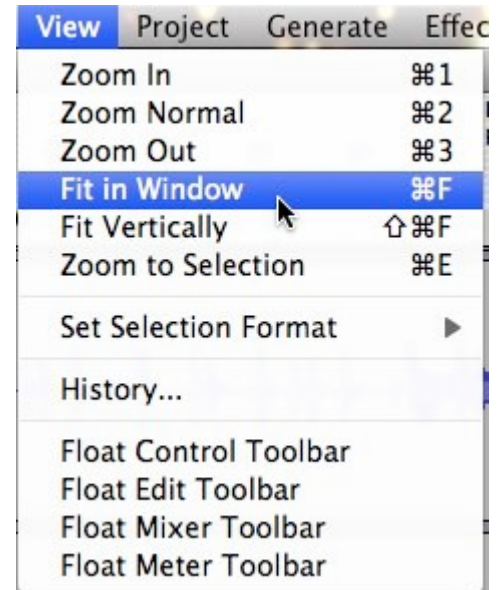
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**FIT TO SCREEN:** To view all your audio tracks on your screen at once, use the menu commands VIEW – FIT TO WINDOW and VIEW – FIT VERTICALLY.

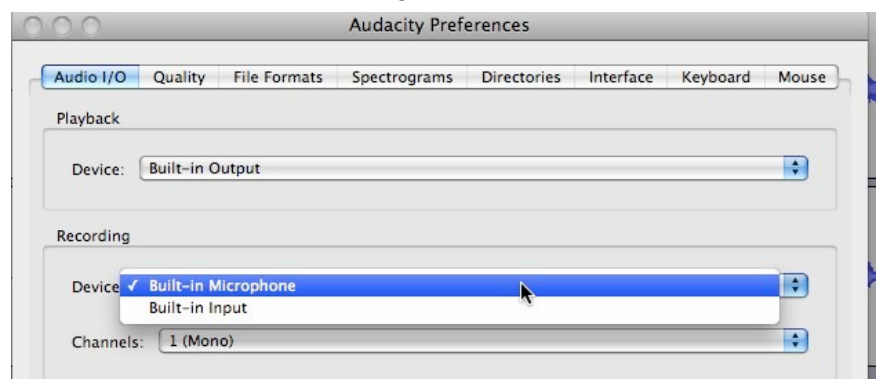
**ADD 30 SECONDS OF SILENCE:** Since PhotoStory3 automatically fades out background audio, if you are using PhotoStory3 (not iMovie) to create your final digital story you will need to add 30 seconds of silence to the end of your Audacity file.



**EXPORT AS WAV:** When you are finished editing your audio file, choose FILE – EXPORT AS WAV and save a wave formatted file on your desktop or flash drive. Give the exported WAV file a new name, like project-final.wav. (Export as MP3 if you have LAME.)

## AUDIO RECORDING

**SOURCE:** If your microphone is not working properly, in Audacity choose EDIT – PREFERENCES (Mac users choose AUDACITY – PREFERENCES) and select the Audio I/O tab. Change the selected recording device. If your microphone does not appear in the list, save your file, quit Audacity, make sure your device is plugged in, and open Audacity again.



This document was created by Wesley Fryer for Celebrate Oklahoma Voices. [www.speedofcreativity.org](http://www.speedofcreativity.org)

